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Annual overview report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination for 2016

Summary

The present report provides an overview of inter-agency cooperation within the framework of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) in 2016. The report highlights the key activities of the Chief Executives Board in fostering a coherent approach to policy, operational and management matters so as to enhance United Nations system-wide coordination in support of intergovernmental mandates. The report also provides information on efforts to enhance coherence and coordination on system-wide preparation for and follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits.

In 2016, CEB strengthened the collective capacities of United Nations system entities to support Member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Through its High-level Committee on Programmes, the Chief Executives Board also contributed to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction and the twenty-first session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Seeking to increase the effectiveness and impact of operational activities of the United Nations system, CEB, through the United Nations Development Group, concentrated on mainstreaming and accelerating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and continued its efforts to implement the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. Through its High-level Committee on Management, the Chief Executives Board also focused on administrative and management issues of system-wide concern in the areas of procurement, finance and budget, human resources and information and communications technologies. The report also highlights coordination activities in which the Board engaged with other jointly financed bodies.

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I. Introduction

1. Pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2008 (LX), the present report provides an overview of the annual work of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB). It also responds to the request by the General Assembly, in paragraph 4 (b) of its resolution 64/289 on system-wide coherence, to include appropriate information on the work of the Board in its annual overview report to the Economic and Social Council, which is also studied by the Committee for Programme and Coordination. The present report covers the year 2016.

2. The General Assembly, in its resolution 71/6, took note of the annual overview report of the Chief Executives Board for 2015 (E/2016/56), as recommended by the Committee for Programme and Coordination in its report on the work of its fifty-sixth session (A/71/16, chap. III.A). The present report highlights major activities carried out in 2016 under the auspices of CEB. As a coordinating body, CEB and its subsidiary mechanisms, the High-level Committee on Programmes, the High-level Committee on Management and the United Nations Development Group, foster policy, management and operational coherence in order to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of United Nations system activities. The Board's activities conform to intergovernmental mandates and support the priorities of Member States.

3. The year 2016 marked the starting point for the implementation of the new integrated global agenda adopted by Member States in a series of landmark agreements, including the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (General Assembly resolution 69/283, annex II) the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda) (Assembly resolution 69/313, annex), the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Assembly resolution 70/1) and the Paris Agreement, adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1, decision 1/CP.21, annex). The transformative agenda based on these agreements represents an interlinked framework which seeks to improve the lives of all people and set the world on a sustainable development pathway. In Assembly resolution 70/1, it was underscored that the challenges of eradicating poverty, combating inequality, preserving the planet, creating sustained economic growth and fostering social inclusion were interrelated and mutually reinforcing. To tackle these challenges, integrated solutions and new approaches would be required. In Assembly resolution 70/1, the role of the United Nations system in supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, which are at the heart of the 2030 Agenda, was emphasized and the "comparative advantage of an adequately resourced, relevant, coherent, efficient and effective" system was noted. This report illustrates how, throughout 2016, the Chief Executives Board and its subsidiary bodies focused their efforts on supporting the implementation of the new global agenda.

4. Transparency and accountability remain key priorities for the Chief Executives Board. In 2016, the Board continued its practice of actively engaging in substantive exchanges with Member States through formal and informal dialogues and further enhancing the information provided on its website (www.unsceb.org). The Board also continued to coordinate with other jointly financed bodies, in particular the

International Civil Service Commission and the Joint Inspection Unit, as well as the Board of Auditors.

II. Strengthening policy coherence and coordination in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

5. In its resolution 70/8, the General Assembly emphasized the key role played by the Chief Executives Board in ensuring coordinated United Nations system-wide support in the preparation of and follow-up to the post-2015 development agenda, in accordance with relevant intergovernmental mandates. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development underscores the interlinked and indivisible nature of its goals and targets, and, accordingly, the Board is pursuing an approach that balances the three dimensions of sustainable development — economic, social and environmental — and integrates development, peace, humanitarian affairs and human rights perspectives, with a priority focus on eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions as the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development.

6. In 2016, CEB continued to advance coherence, deepen collaboration and enhance integration throughout the work of the United Nations system. In addition, the Board sought to strengthen the collective capacities of United Nations system entities to support Member States in implementing the transformative and mutually reinforcing 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Two particular focus areas of the Board's work were combating inequalities, and conflict prevention and peacebuilding, as cross-cutting concerns of importance to the attainment of all sustainable development goals.

7. At its first regular session of 2016, the Board endorsed a set of common principles, developed jointly by its three high-level committees, to guide United Nations system support for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.[1] The principles acknowledge first and foremost that the 2030 Agenda is country-led and country-owned, with actions firmly determined by national needs and capacities. The principles align with and amplify a number of the defining characteristics of the Agenda, including its universal, integrated and global nature; its focus on people and their rights; its pledge to "leave no one behind" and to reach the furthest behind first; its attention to peace, justice and strong institutions; and its emphasis on collective ambition and partnership.

8. In bringing the 11 CEB common principles to life, the United Nations system committed to taking multisectoral and cross-institutional approaches, with each entity contributing according to its strengths, to delivering shared results in support of Member States. Entities would hold themselves to the highest level of accountability to those they serve, including the most vulnerable and marginalized. The principles include using innovation, technology and data to facilitate joint analysis and decision-making; multi-partner financing and inter-agency pooled funds, as part of a broader portfolio of financing mechanisms designed to catalyse

[1] https://www.unsceb.org/content/ceb-common-principles-on-2030-agenda-sustainable.

collaborative action with the United Nations system; and joint and more efficient service provision to provide value for money and support for integrated programmatic action, transparency and accountability for impact. The organizations of the United Nations system commit to continue efforts to develop a high-performing, diverse, skilled workforce, driven by a transformative, collaborative leadership model, while at the same time fostering the health, well-being, safety and security of staff.

9. To support the progression from the Millennium Development Goals to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Chief Executives Board produced, in 2016, a report that captures lessons learned from its reviews of country-level implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. Entitled "Transitioning from the MDGs to the SDGs",[2] the publication delineates the richness of country teams' joint efforts to address persistent development challenges holistically and collaboratively. Conducted by CEB between April 2013 and November 2015 under the joint leadership of the President of the World Bank Group and the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the reviews helped promote progress in countries not on track to reach one or more of the Millennium Development Goals by removing bottlenecks and committing United Nations system organizations to take specific actions to help countries achieve results. The comprehensive report shares the insights and solutions developed as a result of the CEB reviews in order to inform and inspire the wider application of an integrated, cross-sectoral "One United Nations" approach to pursuing sustainable development over the coming 15 years.

10. As the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is, in large measure, an agenda for equality, addressing inequalities is essential for fulfilling the Agenda's central promise to leave no one behind. Accordingly, and within the existing United Nations system mandate to promote respect for human rights and normative standards, CEB, through the High-level Committee on Programmes, has been working to strengthen the system's ability to assist Member States in this regard.

11. At its first regular session of 2016, the Board endorsed a statement of commitment to place combating inequalities and discrimination at the forefront of United Nations efforts to support implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,[3] which had been developed through the High-level Committee on Programmes under the leadership of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). In its statement, CEB members affirmed United Nations system support to Member States' ambitions for a more equal world, respectful of human rights and dignity, and called upon member organizations to put this imperative at the centre of their strategic frameworks, policy guidance and global plans of action in support of implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and in this regard to ensure both that United Nations efforts prioritize the needs of those furthest behind first and that no one is left behind.

[2] http://www.unsceb.org/content/transitioning-mdgs-sdgs.

[3] http://www.unsceb.org/content/ceb-statement-commitment-putting-imperative-combat-inequalities-and-discrimination-forefront.

12. To translate the affirmed commitment into action, the High-level Committee on Programmes, under the joint leadership of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and UN-Women, further developed a shared United Nations framework for action on equality and non-discrimination.[4] The framework, endorsed by CEB at its second regular session of 2016, presents a coherent, strategic, whole-of-system approach to combating inequalities and discrimination, fully grounded in United Nation norms and standards (including the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and relevant United Nations treaties and declarations) and in the Sustainable Development Goals.

13. The framework seeks to establish a common understanding of the challenge of rising inequalities and includes elements of a comprehensive and coherent package of policy and programme support at national, regional and global levels. It supports a common system-wide approach to analysis and monitoring of inequalities and discrimination and their root causes and identifies ways through which to strengthen accountability measures.

14. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes that sustainable development cannot be realized without peace, and that peace will be at risk without sustainable development. It calls for integrated solutions and a redoubling of efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts and build peaceful, just and inclusive societies. In response, CEB has underscored the critical interlinkages among the peace, development and human rights pillars of the United Nations mandate and the importance of an integrated system-wide response to global challenges which threaten to undermine sustainable development.

15. To further this approach, the Board endorsed, at its first regular session of 2016, a statement of commitment on United Nations system support to conflict prevention and peacebuilding within the broader 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.[5] Developed by the High-level Committee on Programmes under the joint leadership of the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat and the Peacebuilding Support Office, the statement contains a set of eight commitments, including a pledge to provide whole-of-system assistance to Member States in integrating perspectives of conflict prevention and sustaining peace in their efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. CEB members further agreed to strengthen the capacities of the United Nations system to identify drivers of conflict, detect early warning signals and respond quickly to imminent threats and to intensify cooperation at all levels across peace and security, human rights, humanitarian and development efforts. The statement also underscores the importance of working towards shared outcomes through joint analysis, planning, programming and monitoring. It further reaffirms the commitment of the United Nations system to supporting women in conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts.

[4] http://www.unsceb.org/content/equality-and-non-discrimination-heart-sustainable-development-shared-un-framework-action.

[5] http://www.unsceb.org/content/ceb-statement-commitment-bringing-un-system-together-support-conflict-prevention-and.

III. Promoting system-wide preparation for and follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits

16. Responding to calls by the General Assembly for system-wide coordination in the follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits continued to be an important area of activity for CEB in 2016. Specifically, the Board, through the High-level Committee on Programmes, sought to enhance United Nations system-wide coherence in the implementation of the outcomes of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction and the twenty-first session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In addition, the Board, through the High-level Committee on Programmes, developed joint contributions and system-wide inputs for the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III).

17. Pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 67/220, 68/224, 69/231 and 71/238, the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020, adopted at the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (Istanbul, Turkey, 2011), has been included as a standing item in the Board's agenda since the first regular session of 2013, with a view to supporting the system-wide follow-up of its implementation. At its thirty-first session in March 2016, the High-level Committee on Programmes reviewed and provided guidance on the progress reported by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, which was subsequently noted by CEB. This included a toolkit intended to serve as a set of guidelines and best practices for mainstreaming the Istanbul Programme of Action into the work programmes of the organizations of the United Nations system.[6] The toolkit had been developed through, and endorsed earlier (in November 2015) by, the Inter-Agency Consultative Group for Least Developed Countries. It was officially launched at a high-level United Nations system event held in May 2016 during the Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020.

18. Trade and investment, including foreign direct investment (FDI), are major drivers of economic growth, employment generation and structural transformation in least developed countries. Yet, despite improvements in their investment climate, many least developed countries continue to be largely sidelined by FDI that could help to diversify their economies, as noted with concern by Member States in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.[7] Enhancing the overall effectiveness of United Nations system support to enhancing the flow of FDI to the least developed countries and the ability of those countries to attract such investment was also an issue of particular interest to Member States which considered the matter at the Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020. In response to the Political Declaration of the Comprehensive High-level Midterm

[6] See http://unohrlls.org/mainstreamingtheipoa/.

[7] See para. 46 of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, which was endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 69/313.

Review of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020, whose endorsement by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/294 was recalled by the Assembly in its resolution 71/238, the Inter-Agency Consultative Group for Least Developed Countries, led by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, in consultation with the Inter-agency Cluster on Trade and Productive Capacity led by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), is addressing the issue of investment promotion regimes with a view to developing recommendations on how the United Nations system can best enhance the overall effectiveness of its support, for consideration by the High-level Committee on Programmes in 2017.

19. Providing coherent and integrated support to Member States in the area of disaster risk reduction continued to be a priority for the United Nations system. Following the adoption of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and responding to General Assembly resolution 70/204 in which the Assembly stressed the importance of coordinated disaster risk reduction activities by the United Nations system for the achievement of sustainable development, CEB, at its first regular session of 2016, endorsed the revised United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience. Prepared by the High-level Committee on Programmes under the leadership of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, the revised Plan included priority commitments, practical guidance and targets for the United Nations system with respect to reducing losses from disasters and supporting countries and communities in implementing the Sendai Framework. By adopting the revised Plan, United Nations system entities committed to enhancing system-wide coherence through a risk-informed and integrated approach to supporting disaster risk reduction; to building United Nations system capacity to deliver coordinated, high-quality support to countries on disaster risk reduction; and to retaining disaster risk reduction as a strategic priority for the United Nations system. The Assembly subsequently welcomed the revised Plan and encouraged the relevant United Nations bodies, agencies, funds and programmes and other relevant institutions and stakeholders to take it into consideration in the coordination and elucidation of their disaster risk reduction activities.[8]

20. Following the adoption, on 12 December 2015, of the Paris Agreement by the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change at its twenty-first session, Member States, under General Assembly resolution 71/228, reiterated their determination to address decisively the threat posed by climate change and environmental degradation while recognizing that the global nature of climate change calls for the widest possible international cooperation aimed at accelerating the reduction of global greenhouse gas emissions and addressing adaptation to the adverse impacts of climate change. In response to Member States' commitment to ambitious climate action, CEB, at its first regular session of 2016, endorsed a set of common core principles for a United Nations

[8] See General Assembly resolution 71/226.

system-wide approach to climate action,[9] developed by the High-level Committee on Programmes. The principles seek to strengthen United Nations system collective support for climate change action at the global, regional and national levels within the context of implementation of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Underpinned by existing United Nations norms and standards, the principles emphasize, inter alia, inter-agency collaboration, United Nations system responsiveness to Member States' needs, and partnerships for climate action.

21. To maximize the impact of United Nations support to Member States, CEB agreed that the United Nations system needed to focus on countries' priorities, pooling its expertise and acting collectively. Consequently, the Board, through the High-level Committee on Programmes, developed and approved, at its second regular session of 2016, a road map for a comprehensive United Nations system strategic approach on climate change action (CEB/2016/6, annex III) in order to operationalize the common core principles and improve the effectiveness, value added and delivery of United Nations system climate action on the ground. The road map outlined a process for preparing a system-wide strategic approach through an inter-agency consultative process under the leadership of UNDP, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, for consideration by the High-level Committee on Programmes in 2017.

22. The General Assembly, in its resolution 67/216, encouraged the United Nations system to effectively contribute to and actively participate in the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), held in Istanbul, Turkey, in October 2016. Responding to the call, CEB, through the High-level Committee on Programmes, prepared United Nations system inputs to the preparatory process leading up to Habitat III as well as the Conference itself. A resulting paper entitled "Urbanization and sustainable development",[10] developed under the leadership of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), focused on the challenges and opportunities of sustainable urban development, and outlined options for harnessing the transformative power of urban growth to positively impact sustainable development at the national and local levels. CEB endorsed the paper at its first regular session of 2016 as a substantive contribution to the third session of the Preparatory Committee for Habitat III, held in Jakarta in July 2016, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 70/8.

23. In addition, CEB issued a joint statement to Habitat III[11] as a system-wide input to the Conference, in which the United Nations system expressed its commitment to working with Member States on implementing the New Urban Agenda (General Assembly resolution 71/256) by promoting an integrated approach to managing urbanization; strengthening spatial planning and urban design and policies and strategies that facilitate economic growth and job creation; and

[9] https://www.unsceb.org/CEBPublicFiles/Common%20Core%20Principles%20for%20a%20UN%20System-wide%20Approach%20to%20Climate%20Action-ODS_0.pdf.

[10] www.unsceb.org/content/urbanization-and-sustainable-development-united-nations-system-input-new-urban-agenda.

[11] https://www.unsceb.org/CEBPublicFiles/CEB%20Jt%20Statement%20%20-%20Urbanization%20and%20Sustainable%20Development%20-%20ODS.pdf.

developing solutions that work to reduce the vulnerability and enhance the resilience of populations in cities and human settlements.

IV. Enhancing effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and impact of United Nations operational activities for development

24. In 2016, the United Nations Development Group continued to place the highest priority on ensuring coherent implementation of General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, with a particular focus on the improved functioning of the United Nations development system and the resident coordinator system in support of the 2030 Agenda, national capacity development and development effectiveness, South-South cooperation and gender equality and women's empowerment.

25. Throughout the year, the United Nations development system experienced strong demand from national Governments for support in implementing the 2030 Agenda. In response to the requests of Member States, as reported by United Nations country teams, for coherent and integrated support for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the United Nations Development Group focused on operationalizing its common mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support approach by developing a mainstreaming reference guide[12] in support of country-level implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Resident coordinators and United Nations country teams supported the integration of the Goals into national frameworks and budgets, and alignment of national strategies, as well as Goal measurement and reporting, including identifying critical data gaps, which called for leveraging the joined-up expertise of the whole United Nations development system.

26. The United Nations Development Group captured initial results and lessons learned from Sustainable Development Goals mainstreaming and implementation in a report entitled "The Sustainable Development Goals are coming to life: stories of country implementation and United Nations support".[13] The experiences with early action on the Goals pointed to the need for bringing all pillars of the United Nations system together across the development, human rights and sustaining peace dimensions to work seamlessly during crises and in their aftermath so as to build resilience and focus on prevention.

27. In support of the Sustainable Development Goals follow-up and review architecture at the global and regional levels, the United Nations Development Group developed guidelines for United Nations country teams on support for voluntary and country-led national Goals reporting. The guidelines are closely aligned with the work of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators and are intended to help United Nations country teams play a supportive role in the preparation of national Sustainable Development Goal reviews.

[12] https://undg.org/document/mainstreaming-the-2030-agenda-reference-guide-to-united-nations-country-teams-2/.

[13] https://undg.org/document/the-sustainable-development-goals-are-coming-to-life-stories-of-country-implementation-and-un-support/.

28. Responding to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which calls for integrated approaches across multiple sectors and goals, the United Nations Development Group, in 2016, initiated the establishment of a new joint fund to advance the 2030 Agenda. The inter-agency pooled fund has been designed to accelerate progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through integrated policy support. It seeks to provide programme countries with catalytic support in response to specific, complex multi-dimensional policy challenges by drawing on the multisectoral policy expertise that exists across the United Nations development system.

29. The United Nations Development Group South-South and Triangular Cooperation Task Team, which was established in 2015 in response to decision 18/1, adopted by the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation at its eighteenth session, and General Assembly resolution 69/239, continued to support United Nations country teams. Co-chaired by the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation and the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Task Team mobilized human, financial and other resources of United Nations organizations to promote systematic and coordinated support for South-South and triangular cooperation in United Nations operational activities at the country and regional levels. In 2016, 97 United Nations country teams provided support on South-South cooperation to national partners (up from 82 in 2015).

30. In further support of South-South and triangular cooperation approaches, the United Nations Development Group Task Team published a collection entitled "Good practices in South-South and triangular cooperation for sustainable development".[14] The report highlights initiatives that have effectively contributed to addressing transnational development challenges and reflects the breadth and depth of United Nations support for South-South and triangular cooperation. It is intended to inform United Nations resident coordinators and country teams when advising Governments on actions aimed towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

31. In order to foster the integration of South-South approaches into national development plans and strategies, the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation provided technical guidance to United Nations country teams by revising the framework of operational guidelines on United Nations support to South-South and triangular cooperation, which was endorsed by the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation at its nineteenth session in 2016. The framework provides operational guidance, definitions, priority actions and performance indicators for the United Nations system in order to facilitate the mainstreaming of support for South-South and triangular cooperation at the global, regional and national levels.

32. In an effort to strengthen normative and operational linkages, as called for by the General Assembly in resolution 67/226, the United Nations Development Group continued its efforts to develop guidance and provide support to resident coordinators and United Nations country teams on operationalizing the normative vision of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The United Nations

[14] http://ssc.undp.org/content/ssc/library/publications/books/good_practices_in_south_south_and_triangular_cooperation_for_sustainable_development.html.

Development Group conducted a series of dialogues to provide thought leadership on emerging challenges such as expanding civil society space, prevention of violent extremism, statelessness, urbanization, discrimination in health care, and climate change and the environment. The dialogues resulted in proposals for joint advocacy and programming. Furthermore, the Group developed policy and operational messages for aligning implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals with international norms and standards, leaving no one behind, active and meaningful participation, and robust accountability at global, regional and national levels.

33. The United Nations Development Group continued to make progress in implementing the mandates set out in General Assembly resolution 67/226 on gender equality and women's empowerment. Ninety per cent of the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks rolled out in 2016 featured specific results on gender equality, compared with 61 per cent in 2015. Gender expertise available to United Nations country teams was further expanded, with the addition of 38 United Nations resource persons to support the development and implementation of United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals.

34. In line with General Assembly resolution 67/226, the United Nations Development Group seized the roll-out of new United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks in close to 40 countries in 2016 as an opportunity to align United Nations country programmes with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. In order to further improve the quality of the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, the United Nations Development Group developed new guidance to ensure that the next generation of frameworks would be firmly aligned with national needs and priorities, grounded in solid data and analysis, and focused on results and impact, with robust monitoring and reporting. Grounded in the shared principle to leave no one behind, the new United Nations Development Assistance Framework guidance promotes integrated approaches to programming across the development, humanitarian, human rights and sustaining peace dimensions, based on joint analysis and multi-year planning frameworks, depending on the country context. The guidance will be rolled out globally in 2017.

35. In response to General Assembly resolution 67/226, the United Nations Development Group continued to make progress with regard to ensuring that the second generation of "Delivering as one" improved results. By the end of 2016, 57 Governments had formally requested the United Nations development system to deliver as one in their country. As part of this effort, the United Nations Development Group continued to ensure the progressive implementation of the standard operating procedures[15] for United Nations country teams. The first progress report on the standard operating procedures provided data and evidence on how those procedures were helping United Nations country teams deliver results together. The United Nations Development Group also introduced a "SOPs tracker" on its website (www.undg.org), which provides a snapshot of progress of implementation in each country.

[15] https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/UN-DOCO_2015-SOPs-Report_final.pdf.

36. As called for by the General Assembly in its resolution 67/226, the United Nations Development Group continued to focus on enhancing strategic planning and reporting on the results of United Nations operations at the country level. In close cooperation with the High-level Committee on Management, the Group had expanded the roll-out of the Business Operations Strategy to 24 countries by the end of 2016. As a voluntary framework for United Nations country teams, the Business Operations Strategy is designed to enhance the cost effectiveness and quality of operational support processes such as procurement, information technology, human resources, logistics, administration and finance in support of the UNDAF/One Programme. In 2016, the guidelines for the Business Operations Strategy were comprehensively updated in light of lessons learned from the piloting of the Strategy in 14 countries. Additionally, an online portal to support United Nations country teams in creating, implementing and reporting on the Strategy was initiated and is expected to be finalized in early 2017.

37. In the area of common operations services at the country level where efforts have been jointly pursued by the United Nations Development Group and the High-level Committee on Management, the first integrated service centre, the Joint Operations Facility, was launched in Brazil in January 2016. The service centre streamlines key operational areas of participating agencies by consolidating operational support services across the United Nations system into one facility at the country level. It is expected to reduce duplication of functions and lower administrative and transaction costs, while at the same time increasing the quality and effectiveness of those services. A study on lessons learned from integrated service centres is planned for 2017.

38. The regional United Nations Development Group teams provided ongoing strategic planning and quality assurance support to United Nations country teams in framing the new generation of United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks in response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The teams also took on key awareness-raising and positioning actions and supported alignment of United Nations programmes at national level. The United Nations Development Group and the regional commissions agreed on a statement of collaboration[16] on support to Member States in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Regional United Nations Development Group teams also supported complementing humanitarian action with a resilience-based response by assisting United Nations country teams in taking on the transfer of responsibility during recovery efforts, and by undertaking data collection and analysis centred around key issues such as refugee situations and violence against women and girls.

39. In response to General Assembly resolution 67/226, the United Nations Development Group, in 2016, accelerated its efforts to further strengthen the resident coordinator system. In order to enhance system-wide leadership collaboration and accountability for delivering together, the Group introduced a new performance management system,[17] the Assessment of Results and Competencies, for resident coordinators and United Nations country teams. The system was designed to capture mutual performance feedback from resident coordinators and

[16] https://undg.org/document/statement-of-collaboration-between-undg-and-regional-commissions/.

[17] See https://undg.org/document/introducing-the-arc-the-new-performance-appraisal-tool-for-un-resident-coordinators-and-un-country-teams/.

United Nations country team members so as to promote more collaborative field leadership that is accountable for shared results. All newly appointed United Nations resident coordinators participated in an induction programme, which continued to receive high marks on its relevance to the resident coordinator function, according to feedback from participants. It will be continuously adjusted in line with needs and demands to provide a leadership exchange experience for newly appointed resident coordinators as well as in situ mentors throughout the operation of the programme.

40. In response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the United Nations Development Group developed a United Nations leadership model in support of a new way for the members of the United Nations system to work together. The model is firmly grounded in the Charter of the United Nations, the norms and standards of the Organization as contained in its treaties and declarations, and its core mandate to promote peace and security, protect human rights, address humanitarian needs, and advance economic and social progress and development. The model is the first component of a joint effort by the three high-level committees of the Chief Executives Board to distil "the who, what and how" of United Nations leadership into an actionable framework, spanning all staff levels, functions and locations, which will contribute to the development of a common United Nations leadership culture aligned with the 2030 Agenda. The comprehensive proposal is expected to be considered by the Board in 2017.

41. In 2016, the United Nations Development Group initiated a number of strategic actions to promote joined-up communications and advocacy in support of national ownership and public engagement in respect of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It organized and contributed to a number of online and face-to-face learning events which improved the way in which the United Nations engages with the public and with Governments, as well as provided support and guidance on branding, strategic communications, messaging and the use of new information and communications technologies. As a result of a targeted learning strategy devised by the United Nations Development Group, United Nations country teams strengthened their ability to advance United Nations priorities and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development among the members of the public at country level. The implementation of the "Communicating as one" pillar of the "Delivering as one" approach was further advanced in 2016, with a focus on joint communications strategies.

42. The United Nations Development Group continued to improve the information management system which allows for systematic tracking of, and data collection from 131 resident coordinator offices on, coordination results. In its second year of implementation, the system has become a key tool for assessing progress on coherence and coordination at the country level. Data from the system informed the 2015 United Nations Development Group results report entitled "Together possible: gearing up for the 2030 Agenda", published in 2016, which showed how United Nations country teams had started to organize differently in response to the demands of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with a marked increase in the number of United Nations joint programmes and a growing number of United Nations country teams results groups firmly focused on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

43. In response to General Assembly resolution 67/226 and Economic and Social Council resolution 2014/14, the United Nations Development Group continued to implement the global system-wide cost-sharing arrangement in support of the resident coordinator system, in order to ensure that United Nations resident coordinators have the necessary stable and predictable resources needed to fulfil their mandate effectively. Further, the Group commissioned an independent review of the cost-sharing agreement, with results expected in 2017.

V. Improving and innovating administrative and management functions of the United Nations system

44. In 2016, CEB, through the High-level Committee on Management, continued its efforts to promote and coordinate reforms on administrative and management issues of United Nations system-wide concern with the aim of improving services, achieving productivity improvements and increasing efficiency and effectiveness across the United Nations system. Specifically, the Committee focused on harmonization and simplification of business practices in the areas of procurement, finance and budget and human resources. The Committee also approved its strategic plan for 2017-2020. The work of the Committee is firmly anchored in mandates of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review and other intergovernmental decisions.

45. At its thirty-second session, held in October 2016, the High-level Committee on Management approved its Strategic Plan for 2017-2020, which was subsequently endorsed by CEB at its second regular session of 2016. The Plan seeks to make a contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by advancing and accelerating management coordination and harmonization of business practices. Building on the results of the completed Strategic Plan for 2013-2016,[18] the new Plan retains a similar focus on enhancements in service delivery, partnerships, human resources, staff safety, data and risk management.

46. The Procurement Network also continued its work on common procurement at the central level. A project on the common procurement of vehicles, seeking to reduce costs and increase efficiency through joint action, continued throughout 2016 and led to the establishment of long-term agreements, with the expectation that all models will be covered by early 2017. A commodities mapping was carried out in 2016 with the aim of identifying additional high-value commodities where common procurement processes will lead to cost avoidance and efficiency gains. Furthermore, procurement collaboration at headquarters duty stations remained a priority throughout 2016.

47. The simplified vendor registration system for procurement, on the United Nations Global Marketplace (www.ungm.org), continued to lead to an increase in registered vendors from developing countries and countries with economies in transition. From 2013 to 2016, there has been a 220 per cent increase in the number of vendors on the Global Marketplace, which reached over 119,000, of which more than 75,000 were from developing countries or countries with economies in

[18] https://www.unsceb.org/content/hlcm-strategic-plan.

transition. Vendors from those countries also accounted for 61.45 per cent of total procurement volume. A total of 7,315 procurement notices were published on the Marketplace website in 2016, representing an increase of 16 per cent compared with 2015.

48. In the area of finance and budget, the High-level Committee on Management Finance and Budget Network continued its work on banking harmonization. In 2016, two global master banking agreements, with Ecobank and Standard Chartered Bank, were established and common banking agreements were completed in 21 countries. Additional common banking agreements are planned in 14 countries for 2017 and 2018. The agreements benefit from increased economies of scale and have resulted in an overall reduction of banking charges and operational risks. They have generated savings exceeding US$ 3 million in reduced labour, documentation and monitoring of banking services, as well as systematic improvement in service levels. The two global master agreements, which provide standardized pricing globally, are available to all United Nations agencies. Building on the positive experience with standardized and coordinated approaches to the procurement and administration of global banking services, additional work in this area is planned for 2017.

49. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/248 B on, inter alia, managing after-service health insurance liabilities, the Finance and Budget Network inter-agency Working Group on After-Service Health Insurance continued its work on studying further options for increasing efficiency and containing costs, by analysing commonalities and differences among United Nations system organizations with regard to the definition, funding and management of health plans and after-service health insurance funds and liabilities. A report on the outcome of the study (A/71/698 and Corr.1) was submitted to the General Assembly in December 2016 and the work of the Finance and Budget Network in this area will continue in 2017.

50. In the area of human resources, the High-level Committee on Management, through its Human Resources Network, actively participated in, and contributed to, the comprehensive review by the International Civil Service Commission of the common system compensation package for staff in the Professional and higher categories (see A/70/30). During 2016, the Network spent considerable effort in preparing for a swift system-wide implementation of the changes approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/244. This included active engagement in the different enterprise resource planning user groups for various providers, in order to align technical requirements and their integration, to the extent practical. The Human Resource Network also actively participated in the launch of the next phase of the Commission's review, focusing on the common system compensation package for locally recruited staff and field staff.

51. The Human Resources Network also held in-depth discussions on a potential joint delivery of selected human resources services with an initial focus on areas such as job classification as well as reference and compliance checking. As a next step, a feasibility study and a cost-benefit analysis for joint service delivery will be carried out in 2017. The Network furthermore contributed to efforts towards achieving potential enhancements of staff welfare and duty of care, in particular for personnel serving in high-risk duty stations.

52. The Information and Communication Technology Network continues to address cybersecurity challenges, mainly through the sharing of threat information

as well as enhancing security awareness training for staff members. In addition, the Information and Communication Technology Network and the United Nations system physical security network, in recognition of the growing interrelation between these two security domains, continue to collaborate and share expertise and experiences that enhance both physical security (as regards access to premises) and logical security (as regards access to computer systems) within the United Nations system, particularly in the area of identity management.

53. CEB recognizes the importance of multilingualism and continued its efforts to promote and facilitate multilingualism in response to General Assembly resolution 67/292. In 2016, the High-level Committee on Management, the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management of the Secretariat and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) launched a joint initiative towards the adoption of a United Nations semantic interoperability framework. This initiative, open to representatives of the documentation, library, information technology and conference management offices of United Nations system organizations, resulted in a consensus on the adoption of the Akoma Ntoso (AKN) eXtensible Markup Language (XML) standard[19] for the United Nations documentation environment.

54. The adoption of a semantic interoperability framework is expected to lead to considerable efficiencies in document management processes. It will make United Nations system documents machine-readable, and thus deliver considerable productivity gains in the translation processes by improving translation consistency and reducing costs, and helping United Nations system organizations easily reuse content and automate formatting tasks. In addition, faster multilingual search capabilities will empower users and allow them to view linked information and track different document versions. Semantic technologies are ideally suited to supporting multilingualism, as they facilitate accurate alignment of text in different languages and precise identification of context for use in computer-assisted translation. Another benefit is multichannel dissemination of data, including greater accessibility to United Nations documents by persons with disabilities.

55. Furthermore, having machine-readable documents available in a common semantically rich format will be a considerable asset for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which requires strong coordination and integration, a robust review mechanism and a solid framework for evidence-based policies and accountability. A United Nations semantic interoperability framework will help in managing information and knowledge harmonically for effective measurement and documentation of progress, linkage of policy development to data, and fostering of accountability of all stakeholders at all levels.

[19] Akoma Ntoso is an OASIS XML candidate standard for parliamentary, normative and judicial documents originally developed by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat.

VI. Sustaining compliance with the International Public Sector Accounting Standards

56. Following the decision of the High-level Committee on Management on the adoption of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) by the United Nations system in 2005 and the establishment of a jointly funded system-wide project in 2006 (see CEB/2006/3), all 24 organizations have completed their implementation of IPSAS successfully and continue to receive unqualified audit opinions. The results attest to the capability of the United Nations system to both adopt and sustain compliance with IPSAS in order to improve the quality of financial reporting and enhance transparency and accountability.

57. The key activities of the Task Force on Accounting Standards in the post-implementation period are targeted at sustaining IPSAS compliance and the realization of the planned benefits of the Standards, including enhanced quality of financial reporting and greater comparability of financial reporting policies and practices across the United Nations system.

58. The Task Force coordinates financial reporting diversity by commissioning thematic focus groups led by member organizations with the support of the system-wide IPSAS project resource. In 2016, the thematic groups reviewed and presented findings for the consideration and approval of the Task Force on (a) analysis of the main United Nations system common arrangements in accordance with IPSAS standards 34-38 (Accounting for interests in other entities), (b) the impairment of property, plant and equipment model and approval of revised useful economic lives, (c) harmonization of after-service health insurance accounting and valuation methodologies and (d) common terminology for financial statements.

59. The system-wide IPSAS project resource continues to support the Task Force on Accounting Standards by facilitating its meetings and communication with high-level committees and external auditors, actively monitoring the activities of the IPSAS Board, coordinating IPSAS-compliant financial reporting diversity, and providing guidance and support in areas of special interest, as identified by the Task Force.

VII. Improving transparency and accountability

60. Enhancing the transparency and accountability of the Chief Executives Board and continuing the direct and substantive dialogue between CEB and Member States, as called for by the General Assembly in its resolutions 64/289 and 69/17, remained a priority for the Board in 2016. To enable engagement with Member States, briefings and dialogues were organized throughout the year. In February, the Chair of the United Nations Development Group delivered a speech and engaged as a panel member in a dialogue with Member States at the operational activities for development segment of the Economic and Social Council. As mandated, the Acting Secretary of CEB presented the main activities of the Board to the Committee for Programme and Coordination in May. The CEB secretariat also formally briefed the Council in June on the work undertaken by CEB and its subsidiary mechanisms and updated the Council on the Board's 2016 activities. Also in June, the Acting

Secretary of CEB introduced the Strategic Framework of the Board for the biennium 2018-2019 to the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

61. The yearly publication of system-wide financial, human resources and procurement data on the CEB website (www.unsceb.org) continued in 2016. The redesign of data-collection requirements of both financial and human resources statistics was completed and implemented for 2016 surveys. During this period, work began on the development of a new data management platform for the data gathering and reporting needs of the CEB secretariat, which is due to be launched in June 2017. The CEB secretariat also designed and developed a web platform to further the data sharing and collaboration needs of the UN Data Innovation Lab, a CEB Data Revolution initiative.

62. April 2016 saw the launch of the United Nations System Data Catalog (http://www.undatacatalog.org/), which introduced the first United Nations system inventory of open data and in so doing, contributed towards organizations' collective impact on the data revolution. The Catalog, available to the public, presents a single point of access to data, spanning the spectrum of organization mandates, and allows for the classification and discovery of data sets by programme area, geographical scope, tags and organization. The aim of this platform is to maximize the benefits of making United Nations system data open and accessible to the public and other key stakeholders, while encouraging organizations to expand the availability of their information. Since its launch, organizations have increasingly incorporated application program interface services which permit automatic updating of their published data set metadata and have thereby contributed further to the reliability and sustainability of the service. Priorities for the continued evolution of this service include complete coverage of open data available within the organizations of the United Nations system, increasing disaggregation of data and integration with the publishing processes of all organizations.

VIII. Coordination between the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination and other jointly financed bodies

63. The United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, through its subsidiary bodies, continued to contribute to the programme of work of both the International Civil Service Commission and the Joint Inspection Unit.

64. The Human Resources Network of the High-level Committee on Management also continued its long history of participation in the sessions and working groups of the International Civil Service Commission and the meetings of the Advisory Committee on Post Adjustment Questions. In addition to working collaboratively on the implementation of the United Nations common system compensation package, outlined in section V above, the Human Resources Network, through its Field Group, collaborated closely with the Commission on matters such as the review of hardship classifications and other field-based entitlements.

65. In 2016, CEB and the Joint Inspection Unit continued their long-standing collaboration, mainly through consultations during the preparation of both the terms

of reference for reports and the reports themselves. For example, the High-level Committee on Management, through its Information and Communication Technology Network, provided input to the preparation of the report of the Unit on knowledge management in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2016/10). The Procurement Network has made the joint review of Joint Inspection Unit recommendations a standing agenda item and the two bodies have agreed on joint actions for responding to recommendations relevant to the Network. CEB also participated in and contributed to discussions held by the Unit during their biannual focal points meeting.

66. In 2016, CEB, through the Finance and Budget Network of the High-Level Committee on Management, continued its engagement with the Board of Auditors and the Panel of External Auditors of the United Nations, the Specialized Agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency, including through an invitation to the Panel of External Auditors to participate in a meeting of the Finance and Budget Network regarding new and revised audit standards. The Finance and Budget Network also continued to foster constructive dialogue with United Nations external auditors through a presentation at the annual meeting of the Panel of External Auditors Technical Group on issues under discussion at the Finance and Budget Network.

IX. Conclusions

67. Over the course of 2016, CEB systematically contributed to the efforts of the United Nations system to enhance coordination and coherence across a range of programmatic, management and operational issues in support of intergovernmental mandates and priorities. As challenges facing the international community grow in complexity, the United Nations system has sought to support Member States by strengthening policy coherence and coordination within the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, promoting system-wide preparation for and follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits, enhancing effectiveness and impact of United Nations operational activities for development, and improving and innovating the administrative and management functions of the United Nations system.